

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OC-05 CCO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

EB-07 H-01 INR-07 IO-10 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00

SP-02 PRS-01 RSC-01 SS-15 USIE-00 USSS-00 SY-04

FAA-00 WRD-01 SCCT-01 NEA-09 CAB-02 /086 W
----- 090300

P R 081115Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7055

INFO AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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STATE AND BRUSSELS PASS FAA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, PINS, PFOR, UK

SUBJ: CIVAIR - HIJACKING OF BRITISH AIRWAYS AIRCRAFT

REF: LONDON 207

1. SUBJECT HIJACKING (REFTEL) ENDED SHORTLY BEFORE MID-NIGHT LAST NIGHT WITH THE CAPTURE OF THE HIJACKER BY POLICE AS HE LEFT AIRCRAFT AT STANSTED AIRPORT, APPROX. 40 MILES NE OF LONDON. CREW OF FIVE, 2 PILOTS, 3 CABIN CREW, WERE UNHARMED. AIRCRAFT LEFT HEATHROW ABOUT AN
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HOURLY EARLIER AFTER 100,000 POUNDS IN CURRENCY AND A

PARACHUTE HAD BEEN PUT ABOARD IN RESPONSE TO HIJACKER'S DEMANDS. THE LANDING AT STANSTED WAS DESIGNED TO DUPE THE HIJACKER INTO BELIEVING HE HAD BEEN FLOW TO FRANCE. THE DECISION TO ALLOW THE TAKE-OFF AND SUBSEQUENT LANDING WAS TAKEN BY THE NATIONAL AIRPORTS SECURITY COMMITTEE, A SMALL TEAM OF SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS, APPOINTED TO FORMULATE ANTI-HIJACK MEASURES IN CONCERT WITH POLICE OFFICERS DURING THE FLIGHT, HOWEVER, THE HIJACKER CAME TO REALIZE HE WAS STILL IN ENGLAND AND DEMANDED THAT ONLY THE STANSTED RUNWAY LIGHTS SHOULD BE LEFT ON AND THAT HE SHOULD BE GIVEN A CAR AND A CLEAR ROAD TO DOVER. AS THE AIRCRAFT LANDED AT 2340Z AND TAXIED TO THE END OF THE RUNWAY, ARMED POLICE WITH DOGS SURROUNDED THE AREA. THE HIJACKER LEFT THROUGH THE REAR DOOR OF THE AIRCRAFT WITH A HOSTAGE STEWARD AND TRIED TO MAKE A RUN FOR IT. HE WAS CAPTURED WITHIN A FEW YARDS. THERE WERE NO EXPLOSIVES FOUND AND THE GUN WAS A REPLICA.

2. COMMENT: THE CURRENT SECURITY REGULATIONS AT UK AIRPORTS ARE VERY STRICT AND FAIRLY THOROUGH FOR INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS AND THOSE FOR EIRE AND ULSTER; HOWEVER, FOR DOMESTIC FLIGHTS ONLY HALF OF THEM ARE REQUIRED TO BE CHECKED. THE SUBJECT FLIGHT, BE 4069, WAS AMONG THE HALF UNCHECKED YESTERDAY AT MANCHESTER. UNDOUBTEDLY, PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS WILL BE ASKED CONCERNING SECURITY MEASURES ON DOMESTIC FLIGHTS BUT BRITISH AIRWAYS, IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE HIJACKING, HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED THAT 100 PERCENT SECURITY SCREENING WILL BE IMMEDIATELY INTRODUCED ON ALL BA FLIGHTS. WE WERE SURPRISED BY THE FLOW OF REAL TIME INFORMATION OVER RADIO AND TV REGARDING SECURITY FORCES PLANS AND ACTIONS. THE US EXPERIENCE IN THE PAST POINTS TO THE NEED TO WITHHOLD SUCH INFORMATION FROM THE MEDIA IN ORDER TO KEEP THE HIJACKERS FROM OBTAINING IT THROUGH TRANSISTORIZED RADIOS. BOTH THE FACT THAT AN ELECTRONIC BEEPER WAS IN THE PACKAGE CONTAINING THE MONEY, AND THE STANSTED LANDING RUSE WERE BROADCASTED IN NEAR REAL-TIME.

3. FURTHER INFORMATION ON DETAILS OF THE HIJACKING (STATE A-3973) WILL BE FORWARDED AS SOON AS APPROPRIATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UK OFFICIALS ARE ABLE TO BE CONTACTED. ALSO THE OBSERVATIONS MADE ABOVE WILL BE PASSED TO THEM.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL AVIATION, AIRCRAFT HIJACKING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON00238
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750007-0452
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750170/aaaacjem.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 LONDON 207
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 APR 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <10 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR - HIJACKING OF BRITISH AIRWAYS AIRCRAFT
TAGS: EAIR, PINS, PFOR, UK, BRITISH AIRWAYS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006